

120.01	General
120.02	References
120.03	Acronyms and Definitions
120.04	Legislation and Policy Development
120.05	Planning at WSDOT
120.06	Linking Transportation Plans
120.07	Linking WSDOT Planning to Programming

## 120.01 General

Transportation planning is a decision making process, required by federal and state law that is used to solve complex, interrelated transportation and land use problems. Various transportation interests from affected jurisdictions including local, regional, and state governments, as well as businesses, transportation providers, and community groups typically identify transportation needs. The needs are then evaluated within the framework provided by local, regional, and state land use and transportation policies as well as state and federal laws. These needs are interpreted in terms of constructed or service strategies that would meet those needs and these strategies are then evaluated based on projected fiscal constraints.

## 120.02 References

Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) of 1998

*Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR)

23 CFR 450 subpart B, “Statewide Transportation Planning”

23 CFR 450 subpart C, “Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming”

40 CFR, “Clean Air Act,” parts 51 and 93

*United States Code* (USC)

23 USC 134, “Metropolitan planning”

23 USC 135, “Statewide planning”

*Revised Code of Washington* (RCW)

RCW 35.58.2795, “Public transportation systems — Six-year transit plans.”

RCW 35.77.010(2), “Perpetual advanced six-year plans for coordinated transportation program expenditures — Nonmotorized transportation — Railroad right-of-way”

RCW 36.70A, “Growth management — Planning by selected counties and cities”

RCW 36.81.121(2), “Perpetual advanced six-year plans for coordinated transportation program, expenditures — Nonmotorized transportation — Railroad right-of-way”

RCW 43.21C “State Environmental Protection Act”

RCW 47.05, “Priority Programming for Highway Development”

RCW 47.06, “State-Wide Transportation Planning”

RCW 47.06B, “Coordinating Special Needs Transportation”

RCW 47.38, “Roadside Areas - Safety Rest Areas”

RCW 47.39, “Scenic and Recreational Highway Act of 1967” and changes thereto

RCW 47.50, “Highway Access Management”

RCW 47.76.220, “State rail plan - Contents”

RCW 47.80, “Regional Transportation Planning Organizations”

RCW 70.94, “Washington Clean Air Act” (Includes Commute Trip Reduction Law)

*Washington Administrative Code* (WAC)

WAC 468-51 and 52, “Highway Access Management”

WAC 468-86, “RTPO Planning Standards and Guidelines”

*Roadside Manual*, M 25-30, WSDOT

## 120.03 Acronyms and Definitions

<b>ACCT</b>	Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation
<b>ARB</b>	Agency Request Budget
<b>B/C</b>	Benefit/Cost
<b>CFR</b>	<i>Code of Federal Regulations</i>
<b>CIPP</b>	<i>Capital Improvement and Preservation Program</i>
<b>CLB</b>	Current Law Budget
<b>CMP</b>	Corridor Management Plan
<b>CTR</b>	Commute Trip Reduction
<b>FAST</b>	Freight Action Strategy for the Everett-Seattle-Tacoma Corridor
<b>FGTS</b>	Freight and Goods Transportation System
<b>FHWA</b>	Federal Highway Administration
<b>FTA</b>	Federal Transit Administration
<b>GMA</b>	Growth Management Act
<b>HSP</b>	<i>State Highway System Plan</i>
<b>HSS</b>	Highways of Statewide Significance
<b>ISTEA</b>	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991
<b>LOS</b>	Level of Service
<b>MTIP</b>	Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program
<b>MPO</b>	Metropolitan Planning Organization
<b>PSRC</b>	Puget Sound Regional Council
<b>RCW</b>	<i>Revised Code of Washington</i>
<b>RDP</b>	<i>Route Development Plan</i>
<b>RTID</b>	Regional Transportation Investment District
<b>RTIP</b>	Regional Transportation Improvement Program
<b>RTPO</b>	Regional Transportation Planning Organization
<b>SEPA</b>	State Environmental Policy Act

<b>SHSP</b>	<i>State Highway System Plan</i> also known as the <b>HSP</b>
<b>STIP</b>	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
<b>TDM</b>	Transportation Demand Management
<b>TEA-21</b>	Transportation Equity Act for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century of 1998
<b>TIP</b>	Transportation Improvement Program
<b>TPO</b>	Transportation Planning Office
<b>UPO</b>	Central Puget Sound Urban Planning Office
<b>USC</b>	<i>United States Code</i>
<b>WAC</b>	<i>Washington Administrative Code</i>
<b>WSDOT</b>	Washington State Department of Transportation
<b>WTP</b>	<i>Washington's Transportation Plan</i>

## 120.04 Legislation and Policy Development

The Washington State Legislature requires the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to plan, develop, maintain, and preserve the transportation network in accordance with all state laws and federal requirements. The Washington State Transportation Commission interprets these requirements through a set of policies that guide the process.

The Washington State Transportation Commission consists of seven members who are appointed by the Governor. This body serves as the board of directors for WSDOT and provides oversight to ensure that WSDOT delivers a high quality, multimodal transportation system that moves people and goods safely and efficiently. The Commission also develops plans and funding recommendations for Legislative approval.

The following are highlights of federal and state legal requirements that influence or direct planning activities conducted by WSDOT. These legal requirements must be satisfied for WSDOT to be eligible to receive or expend federal and state transportation funds.

### **(1) Federal Law: Transportation Equity Act (TEA-21)**

The Transportation Equity Act (TEA-21), passed in 1998, authorizes highway safety, transit, and other surface transportation programs through the year 2004. TEA-21 continues the trend initiated in 1991 by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). ISTEA brought closure to the federal Interstate highway construction era and established new methods for distributing federal transportation dollars.

TEA-21 acknowledges the importance of statewide and metropolitan transportation planning activities at the state and regional levels. Below is a list of mandatory federal planning requirements included in TEA-21.

**(a) Statewide Planning.** 23 USC 135 and 23 CFR 450 — subpart B outline the federal requirements for statewide planning by state departments of transportation.

**(b) Metropolitan Planning.** 23 USC 134 and 23 CFR 450 subpart C — outline the federal requirements for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO).

Each urbanized area (an area determined by the US Census Bureau to have a population of 50,000 or more with a density of at least 500 per square mile) is required to have an MPO. The MPO must develop and obtain approval of a metropolitan transportation plan and transportation improvement program to receive and expend federal transportation capital or operating assistance. The 2000 census identified 13 urbanized areas in Washington; these areas have established eleven MPOs. (See <ftp://ftp.wsdot.wa.gov/public/Cartography/RTPO/rtpompoSimple.jpg>)

They are:

- Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCOG)
- Cowlitz – Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG)
- Lewis-Clark Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (LCVMPO)
- Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)
- Skagit Metropolitan Planning Organization (Skagit MPO)
- Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (SWRTC)
- Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC)
- Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC)
- Wenatchee Valley Transportation Council (WVTC)
- Whatcom County Council of Governments (WCCOG)
- Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (YVCOG)

MPOs cover the metropolitan areas prescribed by federal law and also serve as the lead agency for Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) as enabled by state law (RCW 47.80), that form to include the MPO area (in some cases RTPOs cover a larger area). MPOs with a population over 200,000 are also designated as Transportation Management Areas (TMA).

Each MPO has a transportation policy board consisting of local elected officials from cities and counties. These boards may also consist of representatives from ports, transit agencies, tribes, WSDOT, major employers, the public, and other local transportation interests. Typically, each MPO also has a technical committee composed of staff from local planning and public works departments, and WSDOT Regional staffs.

The results of this transportation planning process are transportation plans and programs that are consistent with, and implement local comprehensive plans. The MPO planning process provides for:

- A forum for gaining local consensus on regional transportation needs.
- The creation of a metropolitan transportation plan identifying future transportation facilities and services needed to support and implement local comprehensive plans.

- Targeted transportation studies used to develop the metropolitan transportation plan.
- A forum to decide how to allocate certain categories of transportation funds.
- The development of a three-year list of facilities and services (to be funded by member organizations) called the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP).

Metropolitan transportation plans provide a significant building block for the development of *Washington's Transportation Plan* created by WSDOT.

## **(2) State Laws: Planning Mandates Shape Project Selection**

The state of Washington has adopted several important laws affecting transportation planning at various levels. These laws provide the framework for transportation decision-making, ultimately guiding the programming, design, and construction of transportation facilities and services. The following is a partial list of the state laws that address transportation planning.

**(a) Statewide Transportation Planning** (RCW 47.06). This set of laws establishes that “. . . the state has an appropriate role in developing statewide transportation plans.” RCW 47.06 specifies that state owned transportation facilities and services, as well as those transportation facilities and services of state interest, must be addressed in these plans and that these plans shall guide short-term investment decisions and the long-range vision for transportation system development.

**(1) Washington's Transportation Plan (WTP).** The WTP provides guidance for the development, maintenance, and operation of a comprehensive and balanced multimodal transportation system. The overall direction of the WTP, prepared pursuant to RCW 47.06, is provided by the Washington State Transportation Commission. The WTP provides the direction for investment decision-making at WSDOT for all modes of transportation.

The WTP includes the following subjects concerning all major transportation modes:

- Meeting the federal requirements identified in TEA-21.
- Critical factors affecting transportation.
- Important issues concerning each mode and strategies to solve problems or improve function.
- Plans for development and integration of the various modes of transportation.
- Major improvements in facilities and services to meet transportation needs.
- Financial resources required to implement the recommendations.

The WTP is a dynamic plan that is updated on a regular basis to address changing conditions. Information and recommendations for the WTP are received from WSDOT regions and Headquarters (HQ), Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Regional Transportation Planning Organizations, local governmental agencies, private transportation operators, and the public.

The WTP addresses transportation facilities owned and operated by the state, including state highways, Washington State Ferries, and state-owned airports. It also addresses facilities and services that the state does not own, but has interest in. These include public transportation, freight rail, intercity passenger rail, marine ports and navigation, nonmotorized transportation, and aviation.

**(2) State Highway System Plan (SHSP or HSP).** The *State Highway System Plan* is the highway component of the WTP. The HSP defines *Service Objectives*, *Action Strategies*, and costs to plan for, maintain, operate, preserve, and improve the state highway system for the next 20 years.

Because needs listed in the HSP exceed projected revenue, the Transportation Commission established a set of priorities for funding projects. (See the *State Highway System Plan*.) The Commission has adopted service objectives and action strategies



as a way to establish a logical process for identifying and categorizing projects that will receive funding over the next 20 years. These service objectives and action strategies provide the framework for defining 20-years of needs on the state highway system. Work that does not fit any of the action strategies will not be authorized or considered in the development of, the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) or any other budget proposal.

The HSP is updated every two years, in coordination with local plan updates, to reflect completed work and changing transportation needs, policies, and revenues.

### **(3) State Environmental Policy Act.**

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requires the environmental effects of state and local agency actions be evaluated per WAC 197-11. Certain categorical exemptions exist. Agencies are required to adopt these regulations by reference and may develop more specific regulations for their own agency to specify how SEPA will be implemented.

WSDOT adopted agency specific SEPA regulations in 1986. Per WAC 468-12-800 (3) the following transportation planning activities are categorically exempt under these rules:

“The development, adoption, and revision of transportation plans and six year construction programs and any other studies, plans and programs which lead to proposals which have not yet been approved, adopted or funded and which do not commit the WSDOT to proceed with the proposals.”

It should be noted the local government Comprehensive Plans developed pursuant to the Growth Management Act (GMA) contain a transportation element and these Comprehensive Plans must include a SEPA review.

Typically, transportation planning does not require review under the National Environmental Policy ACT (NEPA) because there is no federal action in the development of state and local transportation plans.

**(b) The Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A).** Enacted in March 1990, the state’s Growth Management Act (GMA) requires cities and counties that meet certain population or growth-rate thresholds to adopt comprehensive plans. Jurisdictions that are required to or choose to plan under the GMA must also adopt and enforce ordinances that implement the policies adopted in the comprehensive plans. Under the GMA, comprehensive plans carry the force of law and require full public participation in their development.

A comprehensive plan is a series of coordinated policy statements and formal plans that direct growth. Comprehensive plans articulate how a community will be developed in the future. They include elements that address housing, utilities, capital facilities, economic development, land use, and transportation. GMA planning requires that the transportation element be consistent with and support the land use elements in comprehensive plans.

Continuous coordination and open discussion during the development of local comprehensive plans is key to developing valid plans that direct the growth of a community. Representatives from neighboring jurisdictions, special purpose districts, WSDOT, and others with an interest in future development must be involved at the beginning and throughout the planning process. This is to ensure that comprehensive plans are consistent with all other state and local plans.

Local comprehensive plans are important to WSDOT because they influence how state facilities not classified as Transportation Facilities of Statewide Significance, should be addressed, how state highways will be impacted by local land use, and how access requirements will be met or maintained.

WSDOT seeks to work in partnership with local governments as they develop comprehensive plans to help create a balance between the need for mobility and access, while emphasizing design components that improve or maintain the livability of communities. It is also the responsibility of WSDOT to review and comment on local comprehensive plans and amendments.

**(c) Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) (RCW 47.80.020).**

Washington has two types of “regional” or “area wide” transportation planning organizations: MPO and RTPO. MPOs, which serve areas with urbanized populations over 50,000, were introduced in the discussion on federal laws in Section (1)(b). A Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) is a voluntary organization enabled under state law. In an area where an MPO exists, the MPO is required by state law to be the lead agency for the RTPO.

Although voluntary, cities, counties, ports, tribes, and transit agencies usually become members of the RTPO; their participation is their best way to influence local and statewide transportation planning.

RTPOs perform some functions similar to MPOs and, like MPOs, provide a forum for information exchange and collective decision making between local governments and WSDOT. WSDOT is represented on each RTPO technical advisory committee and on most RTPO Policy Boards.

Fourteen RTPOs exist in Washington State, covering all counties of the state except San Juan County. (See Figure 120-1.) Of the eleven MPOs listed in 120.04(1)(b), only Lewis-Clark Valley MPO is not the lead agency for an RTPO. In addition to the ten RTPOs with MPOs as lead agencies, there are the following RTPOs:

- Palouse RTPO (Asotin County is an Adjunct member)
- Peninsula RTPO
- QUADCO RTPO
- Northeastern Washington RTPO (N. E. W.)

**(d) Transportation Facilities and Services of Statewide Significance (RCW 47.06.140).**

The Legislature has declared certain transportation facilities and services, which promote and maintain significant statewide travel and economic development, to be of statewide significance.

Transportation facilities and services of statewide significance (TFSSS) are considered essential state public facilities. (See RCW 36.70A.200.) Essential state public facilities

cannot be precluded from operation or expansion by local comprehensive plans and development regulations. This means that the WSDOT interest in these facilities and services takes precedence over local interests in the planning process. These facilities must comply with local ordinances and permits.

Therefore, planning for TFSSS must be conducted with a statewide perspective in mind. WSDOT, in consultation with transportation providers and regulators, is responsible for development of a statewide, multimodal plan for these facilities and services. The balance between providing for the movement of people and goods and the needs of local communities is the main consideration.

Highways of Statewide Significance (HSS) are one category of transportation facilities and services of statewide significance. The HSS designation was established by the Washington State Transportation Commission, and approved by the Legislature, to identify significant state-owned transportation facilities and establish the following:

1. Standardized levels of service (LOS) for mobility on HSS routes
2. HSS routes receive a higher priority for WSDOT mobility improvement funding
3. HSS routes are specifically exempt from concurrency requirements (except in Island County) and
4. HSS routes will be the focus of Regional Transportation Improvement District funding (King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties).

The HSS includes the Interstate highway system, interregional state principal arterials, and ferry connections that serve statewide travel.

WSDOT makes the final decision regarding the acceptable Level of Service (LOS) for highways of statewide significance. The MPOs and the RTPOs, in consultation with WSDOT, set the acceptable LOS on Regionally Significant state highways (Non-HSS).

For a list of Highways of Statewide Significance in Washington, see <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ppsc/hsp/hss.htm>.

**(e) Functional Classification of Highways and Roadways** (RCW 47.05.021). Functional classification is the grouping of highways, roads, and streets that serve similar functions into distinct systems or classes within the existing or future highway network. The objective of functional classification is to define the appropriate role (mobility versus access) of various highways in providing service and influencing development. Generally, the higher functional classification routes provide mobility between communities, have higher travel speeds, and serve longer distance travel. The lower functional classification routes focus on providing localized access to the land adjacent to the roadway. Functional classification is important in:

- Identifying routes for inclusion in the National Highway System.
- Providing the basis for administering the Surface Transportation Program.
- Determining design levels for a specific route.
- Planning.
- Establishing access control.
- Providing information for land use plans and decisions.
- Conducting needs assessments and cost allocation studies.
- Helping to determine the level of maintenance.
- Conducting the priority programming process.

All state highways are subdivided into three functional classifications. See Chapter 440, “Full Design Level,” for definitions of the collector, minor arterial and principal arterial classifications.

**(f) Freight and Goods Transportation System (FGTS).** The FGTS has been established due to increasing interest in developing the most effective and efficient system for moving freight from suppliers to consumers. The FGTS is required by RCW 47.05.021 section 4, which states:

“The transportation commission shall designate a freight and goods transportation system. This statewide system shall include state highways, county roads, and city streets. The commission, in cooperation with cities and counties, shall review and make recommendations to the legislature regarding policies governing weight restrictions and road closures which affect transportation of freight and goods.”

The FGTS ranks state highways, county roads and city streets based on annual tonnage carried.

The Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB) uses the FGTS to designate strategic freight corridors and is obligated to update the list of designated strategic corridors every two years (RCW 47.06A.020 (3)). WSDOT provides staff and logistical support to FMSIB, including updates to the FGTS.

**(g) Access Control** (RCW 47.50, WAC 468-51, and WAC 468-52). Access control is a program that combines traffic engineering and land use regulatory techniques. Access control balances the desire and need for access (from adjacent properties to streets and highways) with other elements such as safety, preservation of capacity, support for alternative transportation modes, and preservation and enhancement of communities.

There are two forms of access control within WSDOT: limited access control and managed access control. (See Chapters 1420, 1430, and 1435) For limited access control, WSDOT purchases the right to limit access to a highway. Managed access control is a regulatory program established by a state law that requires that access to state highways in unincorporated areas be managed by WSDOT to protect the public and preserve highway functionality. Cities also have authority to grant access to state highways with managed access within incorporated areas. WSDOT retains authority on state highways with limited access.

WSDOT has established the Master Plan for Limited Access Highways for access control that is consulted when planning transportation improvement strategies.

## 120.05 Planning at WSDOT

The role of planning at WSDOT is to identify transportation needs and facilitate the development and implementation of sound, innovative investments and strategies. Many groups within WSDOT conduct planning activities that directly or indirectly influence the design of transportation facilities.

These groups serve a variety of departmental purposes including advocating multi-modal strategies, providing technical assistance, and implementing a wide variety of programs, projects, and services.

The following is a list of the groups, involved in planning, with their responsibilities, and their effect on the design of transportation facilities.

### (1) Transportation Planning Office

The Transportation Planning Office of the Strategic Planning and Programming Division in WSDOT Headquarters consists of three branches: the Systems Analysis and Program Development Branch, the Policy Development and Regional Coordination Branch, and the Central Puget Sound Urban Planning Office (UPO).

**(a) Systems Analysis and Program Development Branch.** The major responsibilities of the Systems Analysis and Program Development Branch are to:

- Coordinate planning activities and provide technical assistance to WSDOT regions.
- Oversee the development and programming of *Washington's Highway System Plan (HSP)*.
- Collect and process data, conduct studies, and develop travel forecasts.
- Coordinate project-planning activities and provide technical assistance to WSDOT regions.

**(b) Policy Development and Regional Coordination Branch.** The Policy Development and Regional Coordination Branch responsibilities include:

- Coordination of planning activities and technical assistance to WSDOT regions, the Central Puget Sound Urban Planning Office, eleven MPOs, and fourteen RTPOs.

- Management oversight of the MPOs to ensure fulfillment of federal metropolitan transportation planning regulations in 23 USC 134, and the RTPOs regarding state requirements in RCW 47.80, WAC 468-86, and the WSDOT Regional Planning Standards.
- Administration of federal and state planning grants for planning organizations.
- Development of the *Washington Transportation Plan (WTP)* in partnership with other WSDOT organizations, MPOs and RTPOs. See 120.04(2)(b) for a description of the WTP.

The responsibilities of the Central Puget Sound Urban Planning Office are discussed under Section 120.05(4).

### (2) Public Transportation and Rail Division

The Public Transportation and Rail Division works to enhance mobility options by managing, coordinating, and advocating for rail, commuting options, and public transportation programs throughout the state. The division's mission is to improve transportation choices, connections, coordination, and efficiency. The division promotes freight rail programs and, in cooperation with Amtrak, passenger rail programs. The division also provides planning, project oversight, financial, and technical assistance to public transportation providers. Division staff oversees the state commute trip reduction program and provides technical assistance and grants to help reduce vehicle miles traveled by commuters in urban regions of the state.

Public Transportation and Rail Division's plans and programs add value to highway and roadway design decisions by emphasizing enhancement, improvement, and coordination of intermodal connections. It is recommended that these plans and programs be referenced during the design process to ensure coordination and efficiency.

**(a) Public Transportation and Commute Options Office.** Programs organized by the Public Transportation and Commute Options Office support passenger transportation systems and services through grants, technical



assistance, research, and planning. The office works in partnership with local communities and governments to promote, improve, and expand and coordinate public transportation resources, and access to those resources, throughout the state. The major emphases in the Public Transportation program are:

- Implement projects and strategies identified in the *Public Transportation and Intercity Rail Passenger Plan for Washington State* and *Washington's Transportation Plan*.
- Identify, support, coordinate, and monitor the planning, capital, and operating funding needs of small urban and rural public transportation providers.
- Improve effectiveness and efficiency of public transportation through training, technical assistance, and coordination to all agencies engaged in public transportation including nonprofit agencies, and private for-profit bus and taxi companies.
- Establish mobility options in areas where public transportation is limited or does not exist.
- Develop, implement, and manage grant programs to enhance and sustain statewide mobility.
- Monitor compliance for safety, including the drug and alcohol programs of rural public transportation providers.
- Manage information and data for the efficient coordination of transportation programs and providers.
- Provide leadership and support for the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT). ACCT is an interagency team responsible for recommending policies and guidelines to promote institutional and operational structures that encourages the efficient coordination of transportation programs and providers.

**(b) Rail Office.** Intercity passenger rail and freight rail are the focus of this office. Passenger and freight rail services are an important part of our state transportation system. Moving people and goods by rail is often safer and more

environmentally friendly than adding traffic to our already congested highways. Improvements to the state's rail system, whether funded by the private sector or the public sector, can help mitigate the impacts of our fast growing economy and population.

The *Intercity Rail Passenger Plan for Washington State* defines a passenger rail system that links major population centers throughout the state and provides the blueprint for needed improvements to these intercity rail systems. The plan emphasizes incrementally upgrading the Amtrak passenger rail system along the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor in western Washington. The vision is to reduce travel times and provide better passenger rail service in the Pacific Northwest. A number of activities unrelated to passenger rail are continuously underway in the corridor, requiring extensive coordination among various agencies and private organizations. The corridor also serves some of the world's busiest ports. WSDOT is working with the Puget Sound Regional Council and other area agencies through the Freight Action Strategy for the Everett-Seattle-Tacoma Corridor (FAST Corridor) project to plan for the elimination of at-grade highway/railroad crossing conflicts and to improve port access.

The *Washington State Freight Rail Plan* fulfills a Federal Railroad Administration requirement that the states establish, update, and revise a rail plan. It also fulfills the Washington State Legislative directive (RCW 47.76.220) that WSDOT prepare and periodically revise a state rail plan that identifies, evaluates, and encourages essential rail services. The plan identifies the abandonment status of various rail lines, provides analysis of the various alternatives to these proposed abandonment's, and provides recommendations that are incorporated into *Washington's Transportation Plan*.

**(c) Transportation Demand Management Office.** The Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Office advocates for, creates, and develops effective solutions to capacity constraints within the state transportation system. TDM Office staff provides financial and technical support within WSDOT, and external transportation organizations, to help ensure

that demand management can be implemented whenever such programs are appropriate and cost effective. Program support is provided in areas such as land use planning, TDM research, parking management, high capacity transportation planning, and policy development for the state's freeway high occupancy vehicle system.

The office also assists public and private employers, jurisdictions, and other interested parties with implementation of RCW 70.94.521 through 551. The goals of the commute trip reduction (CTR) statutes are to reduce air pollution, traffic congestion, and the consumption of fossil fuels. The TDM office provides financial and technical support to employers to meet their mandated CTR requirements.

The TDM Office provides leadership through developing policies and guidelines that help direct public and private investment in the state's transportation system. An essential function of the TDM Office is to develop and maintain a TDM Strategic Plan for WSDOT. This plan helps ensure that *Washington's Transportation Plan* and all other internal planning processes incorporate TDM activities. Regional and local TDM activities and planning functions are further supported by the TDM Office through coordination and implementation of statewide TDM programs, providing public information and marketing tools, and providing training opportunities. The office also administers local TDM grant programs and planning grants that generate commute efficiencies in certain urban areas of the state.

### **(3) Highways and Local Programs Division**

Highways & Local Programs (H&LP) Division of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), has been serving the local agencies of Washington State for over 60 years. H&LP is a statewide organization with Local Programs staff located in all six WSDOT regions and in Headquarters. Under WSDOT's stewardship agreement with the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), H&LP serves as the steward of the local agency federal-aid program by administering and managing federal funds from project development

through construction administration. H&LP provides assistance to cities, counties, ports, tribal governments, transit, and metropolitan and regional planning organizations in obtaining federal and state grant funds to build and improve local transportation systems. H&LP, on behalf of the Secretary of WSDOT, is responsible for preparing and submitting the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) to FHWA, without which no federal project would be authorized. In addition, H&LP provides federal compliance oversight on federally funded projects, technical assistance and training, and promotes cooperative planning and partnerships between WSDOT and local agencies.

### **(4) WSDOT Regions and The Central Puget Sound Urban Planning Office (UPO)**

The roles of planning at WSDOT regions and at the Central Puget Sound Urban Planning Office (UPO) are similar in many ways. What follows are descriptions of the roles of planning at WSDOT regions and the UPO.

**(a) WSDOT Region Planning.** Each WSDOT region has a Planning Office that has several roles, such as:

- Conducting and overseeing a variety of long-range planning studies.
- Coordinating and assisting planning organizations outside WSDOT.
- Assisting in development of prioritized plans.
- Administering internal WSDOT programs.
- Overseeing access control activities.
- Performing Development Services activities.

For the Olympic and Northwest Regions, many of these long-range planning functions are assigned to the Central Puget Sound Urban Planning Office (UPO).

Each Region Planning Office conducts long range planning studies such as Route Development Plans, Corridor Master Plans, and site-specific transportation alternatives and studies. These studies evaluate alternative solutions for both existing and projected transportation needs, initiate the long-range

public involvement process, and ultimately provide the foundation for inclusion of identified improvement strategies into *Washington's Transportation Plan* (WTP) and the *State Highway System Plan* (HSP).

Each Region Planning Office coordinates with and assists the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPO). In some cases, the Region Planning Office provides staff support for the local RTPO.

The region works with the Washington State Patrol to include their weigh site and other highway related needs in WSDOT projects.

Often, the Region Planning Office is responsible for administering internal WSDOT programs such as traffic modeling, the Travel Demand Management program (TDM), and responding to citizen concerns about pedestrian, bicycle, and other transportation related issues.

Development Services is the process of reviewing new developments affecting state highways, such as master planned communities, major subdivisions, and commercial projects. Developers provide mitigation for their impacts to the state highway system under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and Highway Access Management. The Development Services section works closely with the local lead agency during SEPA reviews and the permitting process to secure appropriate improvements to the state transportation system from developers.

The region's Planning Office also reviews and comments on local Comprehensive Plans so development regulations, local transportation elements, and WSDOT goals and interests are consistent.

**(b) The Central Puget Sound Urban Planning Office.** The Central Puget Sound Urban Planning Office (UPO), based in Seattle and part of the Strategic Planning and Programming Division, has a similar role to a region Planning Office yet the UPO role is more specialized. The UPO oversees long range planning efforts of WSDOT in the four-county Central Puget Sound area of King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap Counties. This is the same area covered by the MPO called the Puget Sound Regional Council

(PSRC), located in Seattle. The four-county region is geographically split between WSDOT's Olympic and Northwest Regions. UPO also has the responsibility of coordinating plans developed by Washington State Ferries with the strategies contained in the *State Highway System Plan*.

The Central Puget Sound Urban Planning Office also participates in the review of documents mandated by the Growth Management Act (GMA). This includes the review of draft Comprehensive Plans as well as the Draft Environmental Impact Statements that provide supporting documentation to the Comprehensive Plans. The Central Puget Sound Urban Planning Office also provides staffing and logistical support for the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID). The RTID, a regional transportation planning committee created by legislation, provides funding for major transportation projects in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties.

Development Services responsibilities remain with the Northwest and Olympic Regions Planning Offices.

## **(5) Washington State Ferries Division**

The *Long Range Ferry System Plan*, prepared by the Washington State Ferries Division, considers recent trends in ferry ridership, system costs, regional economy, and other system and site factors. It is recommended that designers contact the Washington State Ferries planning office during the design phase of any conceptual solution occurring near a ferry terminal or for a project that might add significant traffic to or around a ferry terminal.

## **(6) Aviation Division**

The WSDOT Aviation Division:

- Provides general aviation airport aid, including an award-winning lighting program.
- Provides technical assistance for airspace and incompatible land use matters that may affect airport operations or compromise safety.
- Coordinates all air search, rescue, and air disaster relief.
- Administers pilot and aircraft registration.

This division is responsible for development of the *Washington State Airport System Plan*. The division also operates sixteen state airports strategically placed throughout the state.

## **120.06 Linking Transportation Plans**

A main concern of the traveling public is that the transportation system allows them to move from point A to point B quickly, safely, and with the least possible inconvenience and expense. To fulfill the public's desire for a seamless transportation system, coordination of transportation planning efforts is essential.

### **(1) Coordination of Planning Efforts**

Coordination of planning efforts between city, county, MPO, RTPO, public and private transportation providers, and state transportation plans is not only required by federal and state laws — it makes good business sense. Coordination of transportation planning is a cyclical process and begins as a bottom-up approach. Figure 120-1 is a diagram that explains the general relationships between the various transportation planning processes and organizations.

Cities and counties explore their needs and develop *comprehensive plans*. Among other components, each comprehensive plan contains a land use element and a transportation element, which must be consistent with each other. The transportation element (sometimes known as the *local transportation plan*) supports the land use element. The requirements in the Growth Management Act (see 120.04 (2)(d)) guide most of the comprehensive plans developed in the state of Washington.

MPOs and RTPOs coordinate and develop metropolitan and regional transportation plans. These plans cover multiple cities and, for RTPOs, encompass at least one county. The purpose of metropolitan transportation plans and regional transportation plans is to ensure that all the region's transportation needs are accurately captured in one document, to develop a financial strategy to address the unfunded needs, and to assure local plan consistency across jurisdictional boundaries.

Planning is undertaken to ensure consistent policy among all the various jurisdictions, whether state, regional, or local. It does not matter where the planning process begins because the process is both cyclic and iterative. If one component of a plan changes, it may or may not affect other components. If any one plan changes significantly, it can affect each of the other plans in the cycle. Early communication and coordination of conceptual solutions are critical to ensuring project delivery.

### **(2) Transportation Improvement Programs**

Figure 120-2 shows the coordination of effort that produces consistent and comprehensive transportation plans and programs.

From these transportation plans, each town, city, county and public transportation provider develops a detailed list of projects that will be constructed in the ensuing three to six years. This detailed list of transportation projects is called the six year Regional Transportation Improvement Program also known as the Six-Year RTIP or the three-year Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP).

The six-year RTIP and the three-year MTIP must be financially constrained, meaning that the total cost of all projects cannot exceed the established revenue authority. Financially constraining the RTIP and the MTIP is one method used to ensure that the list of projects represents what the local agency intends to build in the near future to implement local transportation plans. Once each jurisdiction develops its individual TIP, the RTPO and the MPO compile these individual TIPs into a regional or metropolitan TIP.

Each RTPO/MPO completes a Regional or Metropolitan Improvement Program (RTIP or MTIP) at least once every two years (RCW 47.80.023). The RTIP/MTIPs must meet the requirements of federal and state laws regarding transportation improvement programs and plans. To achieve this, the RTIP/MTIP:

- Is developed cooperatively by local government agencies, public transit agencies, and the WSDOT Regions within each area.



- Includes all federally funded WSDOT Highway Construction Program projects.
- Includes all significant transportation projects, programs, and transportation demand management measures proposed to be implemented during each year of the next period.
- Identifies all significant projects, whether funded by state or federal funds.
- Includes all significant projects from the local transit development plans and comprehensive transportation programs required by RCW 35.58.2795, 35.77.010(2), and 36.81.121(2) for transit agencies, cities, towns, and counties.
- Includes all transportation projects funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).
- Includes all federally funded public lands transportation projects.
- Includes all WSDOT projects regardless of funding source and clearly designates regionally significant projects as such.
- Complies with all state (RCW 70.94) and federal (40 CFR 51 & 93) Clean Air Act requirements (where applicable).
- Includes only projects consistent with local, regional, and metropolitan transportation plans.
- Includes a financial section outlining how the RTIP/MTIP is financially constrained, showing sources and amounts of funding reasonably expected to be received for each year of the ensuing six/three-year period, and includes an explanation of all assumptions supporting the expected levels of funding.

Funding agencies often give preference to jointly sponsored transportation projects. RTPOs and MPOs can develop jointly sponsored projects since they represent multiple agencies. Major projects backed by an RTPO or an MPO have a heightened chance of receiving funding.

### **(3) Development of the STIP**

An important role of the WSDOT Highways and Local Programs Division is to collect all RTIP, MTIP, and HSP projects in appropriate years and assemble all of the state and federally funded projects, and the projects of regional significance, into the (three-year) Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Development of a new STIP every two years is required by federal law in order to expend federal transportation dollars. The state of Washington, however, develops a new STIP each year to enhance project flexibility and to ensure project delivery.

The Governor's approval of the MTIPs; plus the Federal Highway Administration's, and the Federal Transit Administration's approval of the STIP; are required prior to expenditure of federal funds.

## **120.07 Linking WSDOT Planning to Programming**

Figure 120-3 is a flow chart describing the process conceptual solutions must go through to receive funding. This chart also describes the link between planning and program development. Project Definition is presented in Chapter 330, Design Matrices are in Chapter 325, and Environmental Documentation is in Chapter 220.

The role of WSDOT planning is to determine *what* facilities or services will be provided *where*. The role of WSDOT Systems Analysis and Program Development is to determine *when* the improvements will be provided. The WSDOT Systems Analysis and Program Development Branch prioritizes the projects that are selected from the *State Highway System Plan* component of *Washington's Transportation Plan*. (See 120.04(2)(b).)

### **(1) The Role of the Systems Analysis and Program Development Branch**

Taking the HSP from the planning stage through the programming stage is one role of the Systems Analysis and Program Development Branch. The Systems Analysis and Program Development Branch and the Project Control and Reporting Office manage the statewide highway construction program including:

- Recommending subprogram funding levels.
- Developing project priorities.
- Preparing, executing, and monitoring the highway construction program.

One responsibility of the Systems Analysis and Program Development Branch is oversight of the *Programming Process*. The legislative authorization for this activity is in RCW 47.05, Priority Programming. The Programming Process describes how projects that have been identified in the HSP are prioritized.

## **(2) Subprogram Categories**

Subprogram categories for the service objectives and action strategies have been established, by the Transportation Commission, within WSDOT's budget to allow decision makers to determine timing and the amount of money to invest in solving transportation needs. (See the HSP for the service objectives and action strategies.)

The order of the needs within each subprogram category is usually prioritized based on benefit/cost methodology; however, some subprograms do not have a prioritization methodology attached to them (such as Economic Initiatives).

The Department may combine projects that are scheduled to be constructed within six-years of each other to eliminate projects at the same location just a few years apart.

Following completion of construction, WSDOT evaluates the effectiveness that the project had on the performance of the transportation system.

## **(3) WSDOT Budgets**

WSDOT uses the *State Highway System Plan* component of the twenty-year *Washington's Transportation Plan* as the basis for prioritizing and programming to select projects for the Agency Request Budget (ARB) and Current Law Budget (CLB). To be selected, a project must already be included in the HSP.

WSDOT operates on a two-year funding cycle. This is primarily because the state Legislature appropriates state transportation funds on a biennial basis. The Washington State Transportation Commission has developed a Six-Year Plan Element and the ten year Capital

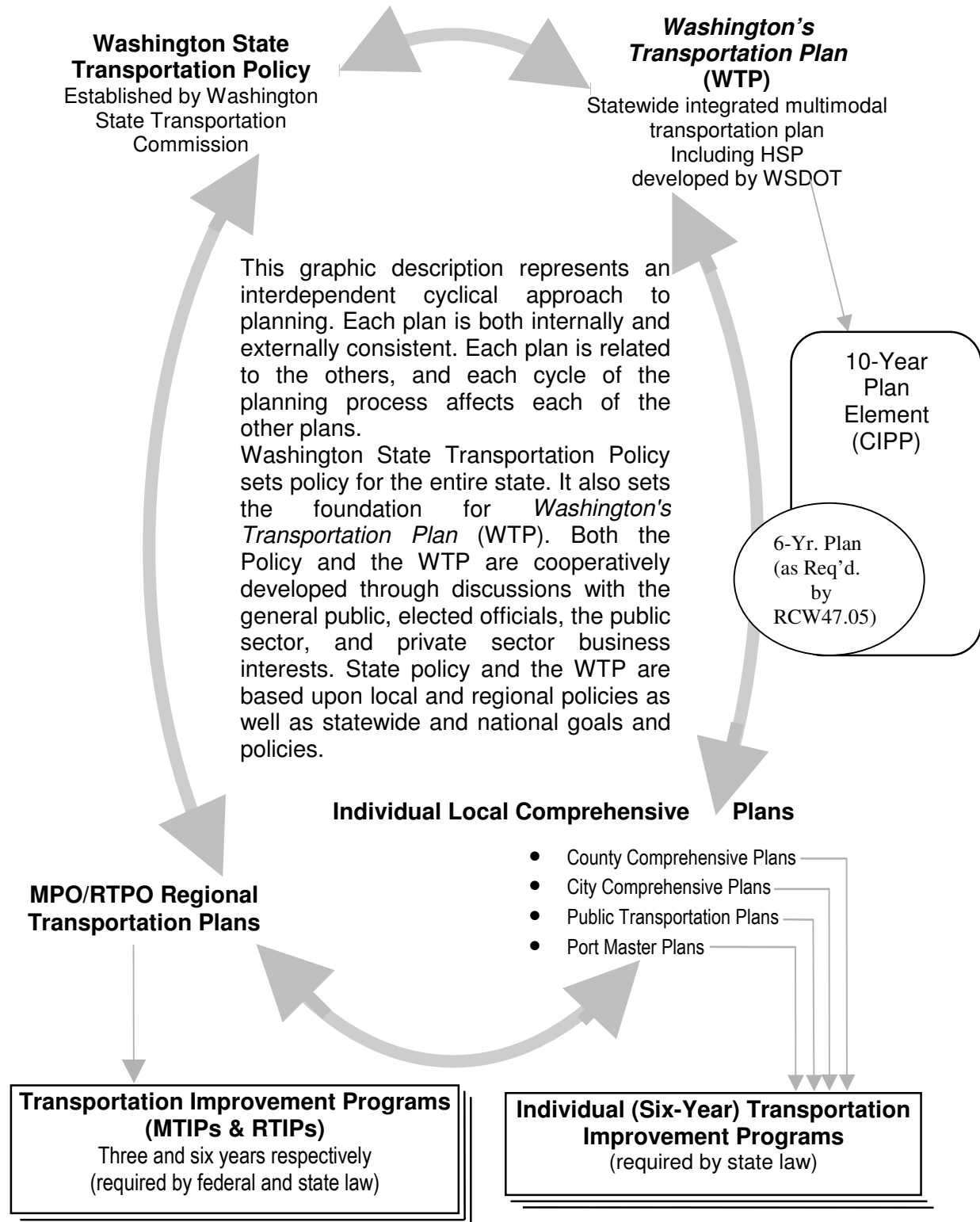
Improvement and Preservation Program (CIPP). The plans were developed to better implement the intent of federal and state laws influencing transportation and land use, to encourage a longer range perspective in the funding of transportation projects, and to be consistent with local and regional transportation planning processes. These plan elements will be used by the Commission to develop the two-year budget proposals.

When appropriated by the Legislature, WSDOT's two-year budget is forwarded to the appropriate RTPs and MPOs for any needed revisions to the RTIPs and MTIPs.

## **(4) Key Points of Planning and Programming at WSDOT**

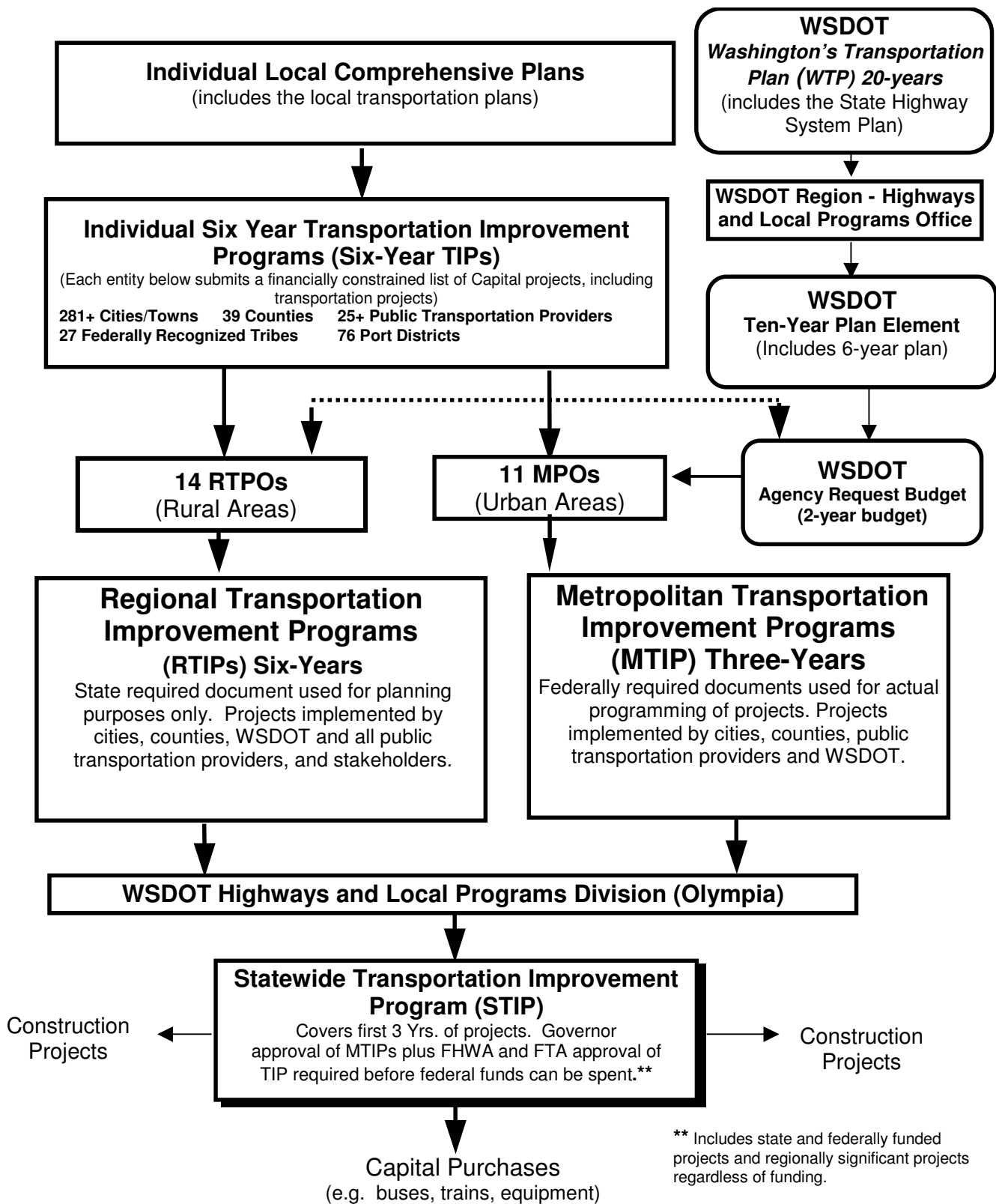
Below is a list of key points to remember about WSDOT's planning and programming process:

- Commission Policy sets the direction for *Washington's Transportation Plan* (WTP).
- Federal transportation laws and state transportation and land use laws guide solutions to address the needs for transportation facilities and services.
- The WTP is developed in partnership with MPOs and RTPs and is tied to the land use plans of towns, cities, and counties.
- The region's Planning Offices have the main responsibility for meeting many of the state and federal planning requirements.
- The *State Highway System Plan* is a component of the WTP.
- The *State Highway System Plan* sets forth service objectives and action strategies to implement Commission policy.
- Conceptual solutions are prioritized within most budget categories based on benefit/cost analyses to obtain the greatest benefit at the least cost.
- Tradeoffs between project categories are made by policy choice through a multitiered process (WSDOT executives, Commission, and Legislature).
- An improvement strategy must be listed in the *State Highway System Plan* to be considered for project funding.



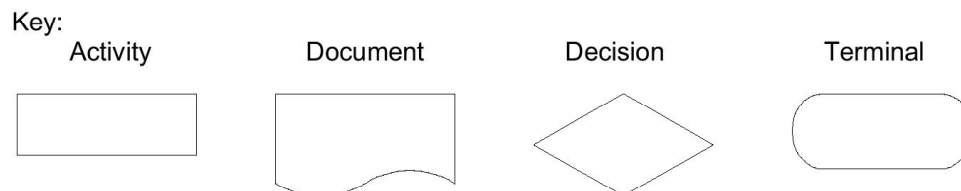
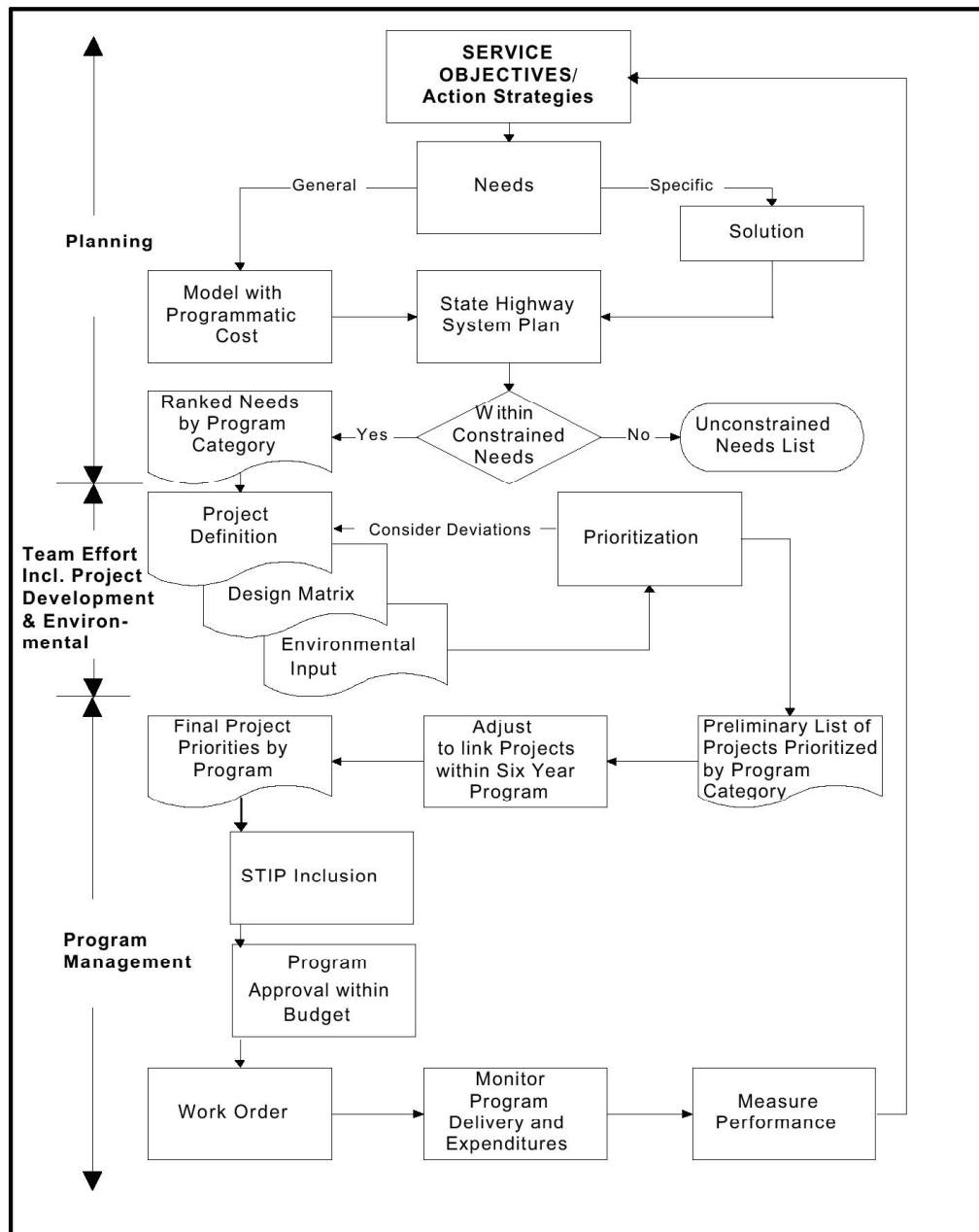
**Relationship Between Transportation Plans and Planning Organizations**

*Figure 120-1*



**Transportation Improvement Programs**  
*Figure 120-2*





**Linking Planning and Programming**  
*Figure 120-3*